

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Karen P. Hewitt***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - January 29, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced today that Michael Benton Laughead was arraigned yesterday on a criminal complaint charging him with Possession of Child Pornography, in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section and 2252(a)(4)(B).

According to the complaint and accompanying court documents, on or about June 5, 2007, Laughead possessed at least thirteen videos on his computer containing images of minors, some of whom were younger than ten years of age, engaging in sexually explicit conduct with adults.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney William Hall, who is prosecuting the case, Laughead, a limousine driver, was arraigned on the complaint earlier today in federal court in San Diego and is in federal custody. Laughead's next appearance in court is scheduled for January 31, 2008 at 10:30 a.m., before United States Magistrate Judge Barbara L. Major for a detention hearing. The government sought detention based upon danger to the community.

This case stems from an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who is a member of the San Diego Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, other members include the Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the San Diego Police Department, the San Diego Sheriff's Department, the San Diego District Attorney's Office, the San Diego City Attorney's Office, the United States Postal Inspection Service, Chula Vista Police Department, the La Mesa Police Department, and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide Department of Justice initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

DEFENDANT

MICHAEL BENTON LAUGHEAD

Case Number: 08MJ0214-BLM

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section and 2252(a)(4)(B) (Possession of Child Pornography)
Maximum Penalty: 10 years' incarceration, \$250,000 fine, a minimum of 5 years and up to a lifetime of supervised release and registration as a sex offender.

AGENCY

Federal Bureau of Investigation

A complaint itself is not evidence that the defendant committed the crime charged. The defendant is presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.